SERMON,

PREACHED AT

Broadmead, BRISTOL, January 16,

AND AT

Little St. Hellen's, LONDON, April 6, 1774.

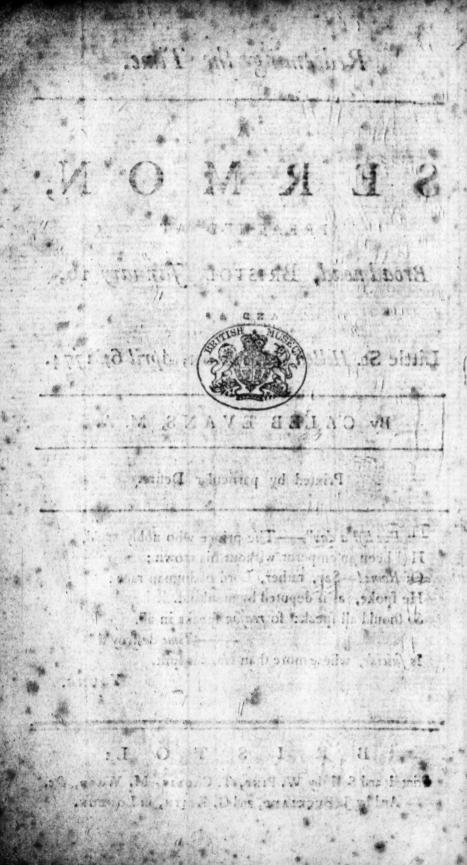
By CALEB EVANS, M. A.

Printed by particular Defire.

"I've lost a day"—The prince who nobly cry'd,
Had been an emperor without his crown;
Of Rome!—Say, rather, Lord of human race:
He spoke, as if deputed by mankind.
So should all speak: so reason speaks in all.
—Time destroy'd
Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt.

BRISTOL

And by J. BUCKLAND, and G. KEITH, in LONDON.



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word and in and by his Spirit to the hearts of his nearle - Awake then that Heep's it and and front

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REDEEMING THE TIME.

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HE apostle in the preceding part of this chapter fets before the Ephefians, to whom this epiftle was originally addressed, the nature of their christian character, and the correspondent obligations they were under to a holy life and convertation. He reminds them that they were by their profession, the dear children of God, and should therefore be followers of him as fuch; that they were faints, feparated unto God, and devoted to his fear and fervice, and should therefore avoid those things which did not become their facred character; in a word, that though they had been heretofore darkness, yet now they were light in the Lord, and should therefore walk as children of the light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproving them. This the apostle intimates they were well qualified to do, as they were themselves enlightened by the gospel, the light of which would enable them to make manifest the evil of those things which were done by their heathen neighbors, and of which it was scarcely decent to speak. To shew

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that the design of the gospel was to expose and make manifest the evil of such things, he adds, wherefore He i. e. the Lord, saith—in his word, and in and by his Spirit to the hearts of his people—Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. He shall discover to thee that which thou wast before ignorant of, and bring thee more and more out of the darkness of sin and satan into his marvellous light. It follows—See then, that is, since you are by your profession enlightened and renewed persons, see to it that ye behave accordingly, that you walk circumspectly or cautiously, not as fools but as wise,—Redeeming the time.

Now what was written aforetime was written for our learning, as well as for the instruction of those to whom it was first addressed, and it becomes us therefore humbly and diligently to attend to it.—In improving the subject, I propose to consider,

- won I. What is implied in redeeming the time.
- II. How time may be redeemed.

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III. Why it ought to be redeemed.

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L What is implied in redeeming the time.

That which as christians we are here exhorted to redeem, is Time. And what can be more valuable,

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what more worthy of redemption! And yet alas, for the most part, instead of redeeming it, how lavish, how prodigal are we of it, how apt inconsiderately to waste and destroy it! But we are exhorted by the apostle to redeem it. By which Grotius and fome other commentators suppose we are to understand, avoiding persecution, to which those who made a profession of christianity at the time referred to by the apostle were exposed. As though the apostle had said-See that you draw out your time as long as you possibly can, and do not, by unnecessarily exposing yourselves to persecution, provoke your enemies to cut you off. But though this might be the duty of those to whom the apostle wrote, yet it by no means appears to comprehend the full meaning of the exhortation here given. Redeeming the time, seems to imply in it the following ideas.

1. Recovering as far as may be that which we have loft.

Monsieur Saurin observes, that the original word (Paroplopula) has a peculiar force, and implies (as the French word racheter, and the English word redeem also does) the recovering what has been lost: and he apprehends there is an allusion to the enormities of their heathen life, in which so much former time had most unhappily been lost and thrown away. As though the apostle had said, you have heretofore lost much precious time, have consumed, have wasted it in the service of sin and Satan, and it behoves you now therefore to use every method in your power

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to recover, to fetch back again as far as may be, the years that are past, to walk for the time to come fo much the more circumfpectly, not as fools but as wife, redeeming the time, recovering the precious moments you have loft .- And have we not all loft much of the precions time which hath been given us; and have we not great need therefore in this respect as well as in every other, to redeem the time! Though we were not born in a heathen land, nor educated in heathenish darkness and ignorance, but were perhaps indulged with many peculiar advantages for the attainment of wildom and knowledge in our early years; and have lived in the world possibly twenty, thirty, or forty years, or it may be more still; yet what have we done? What have we done that was worth the doing? What have we done that we ought to have done? What valuable improvement have we made of our precious time? Are we not with respect to this important article time, deeply in arrears? Have we not much to recover, to redeem? Should not therefore the time past be esteemed by us sufficient and more than fufficient to have wrought the will of the flesh, to have ferved divers lufts and vanities, and the time to come be wholly given to God? When a laboring man, or an artificer, has upon any occasion lost a day of work, if he is a diligent, industrious man, and has an opportunity of doing it, he will fetch it up again, by working fo many hours extraordinary on days to come. And thus should the christian redeem the time he has loft. And O how much have

we to redeem! We have left not a day; a week, or a month only, but years, perhaps many years, how active; showed ligent therefore should we be for the time to come! Remember Christians that you have heresofore loss much precious time; and should now therefore endeavor to be demited in any most reven

there that confiders this as any excliency in his character (a.) Redeeming the time further; implies refeuring it from the bondage of idleness, fin and folly.

That time that is yawned away in idleness, or wasted in the fervice of fin and folly, may properly be confidered as in a flate of bondage and fervitude .: It is not in its own free and natural flate, it is not employed in the manner in which it ought to be, but is enflaved Now redeeming the time im plies the rescuing it out of such a state of bondage, and employing it in fuch a manner as is agreeable to the nature and defign of its alt is melancholy to think how much precious time in continually mily pent, misapplied, idetained in the fervice of those matters, if I may to fpeak, who have no right to it, but are guilty of usurpation in the dominion they prefume to exercise over it. There is indeed, as Solomon* observes a time for all things under the fun-A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted, a time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to break down, and a time to build up, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance. Nor is it to be supposed, from the very nature of man himfelf, and from the nature of his focial connexions

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nexions, that it was ever the delign of our Creator we should be always exactly in the samer temper and disposition, or that we should be always employed precifely in the same manner. - It is faid of Phocion, a Grecian Orator and General, that he was never feen either to laugh or to weep. But who is there that confiders this as any excellency in his character? What is it more than may be faid of a flock or a flone?—It is as lawful, and perhaps as neceffary to have fometimes an unbent and innocently cheerful hour, as it is at other times to be employed in a more ferious and important manner. The man that is incapable of unbending his mind, is feldom an amiable man. You generally find fuch perfons four, morofe, cenforious, fretful, discontented, and unfociable. But the unhappiness is, too often under the idea of relaxation and innocent cheerfulness, we indulge a criminal levity and distipation, unfit ourselves for the discharge of the more serious duties of life and religion, inflead of rendering our return to them the more agreeable, and enflave those hours to the purposes of felf indulgence, to which employment of a very different nature bath an undoubted claim! Now do our consciences tell us, that we have in this or the other particular inflance been chargeable with mispending time, whether it be by dozing it away in useless idleness, or prostituting it to improper purpofes?-lef us remember that the exhortation addressed to us is, to redeem timeand that this implies refcuing it from a state of flavery, and reftoring it to a flate of liberty. It would moire

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would be well if we were here, each one for himfelf, to take a particular account of the manner in which we fpend our time, and to form an impartial judgment concerning ourselves as to this important matter. Do I, for instance, habitually indulge myfelf with more hours of fleep than nature remires, or than is necessary to my health and vigor? Phyficians generally agree, that fix or at the most eight hours fleep is as much as conduces to health in any constitution, and that more is prejudicial, and tends only to stupify the faculties of the mind, and enervate the strength of the body. And yet how many are there, who waste almost half their time in bed! Imprison the precious hours of life, in a state of temporary death! Do not use that balmy bleffing, sleep, as the fweet restorative of tired drooping nature; but abuse it to the indulgence of floth and idleness! And have I, let each one fay, thus profituted, thus abused, thus enflaved any of my precious time? Let it then remain in captivity no longer, but now. now e'er it be too late, let me, in the strength of divine grace, rescue it from its bondage, and set it free from that yoke of flavery I have hitherto unjustly laid upon it." Or have I indulged myself in B gallo mivida hash andolence

[&]quot;Natura appetit ammus aliquid agere semper, neque ulla conditione quietem sempiternam possit pari. Somnum, nis requiem corporibus et medicinam quandam laboris aserret, nobis contra saturam datum putaremus: ausert enim sensus, actionemque collic omnero. Endymionis somnum nobis profecto nolimus dari stidque si a cidat, mortis inslar putemus." diem tiem and ade mismosid views contra

[&]quot;Propter nochimani quietem dimidio tantini quique spatio vita fue vivita Extendante vitam agendo, nam vita argumentum et offi-

indolence and trilling when awake? Have I enployed any of my time in the fervice of din and fatan, in the pursuit of unlawful pleasures?-Or have I fpent more of my precious time than I ought to have fpent, in mere amusement, though ever fo in cent, or devoted those hours to worldly bufinels and employments, which ought to have been facred to God and religion?-In short, have I in a greater or less degree, and in this or the other instance, enflaved my time?-Let me now in the fear of God, endeavor to redeem it. No longer go on abusing it in the manner I have done, but by divine grace, release it from its captivity, and emvolt for the products bours of telling a flate, of tem-

volvey deal (1) o hot use that below, bletfing, fixe. es cium, actus est, Circumscribatur nox, et aliquid ex illa in diem transferatur." Pliny.

Turpis eff. qui alto fole in lecto donniens jacet, qui vigilare medio die incipit, qui officia lucis nochique pervertit; Dinnes about it dicam, retro vivunti" you bevelles end . Salade

Falfely luxurious, will not man awake; And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy The cool, the fragrant, and the filent hour, - III of Comeditation due and facred long Batter That store and it For is there aught in fleep can charm the wife? To lie in dead oblivion, losing half The fleeting moments of too fhort a life? Total extinction of th' enlightened foul! -og Or elle to feverill vanity alive tillog morne from material entit Wildered, and tolling through distempered dreams? Jabo Longer than hature craves when every muse now sind mybull and every blooming pleasure wait without, it is the afrom To blefe the wildly devices morning walk?" and range ? " ive will dendante winn averdo, nem vite arruntenum eitelt

ploy the in a different manner. Which leads me to addyord it as and I as bomesher your to a non-no

plies, improving it to the great and important pur-

It is not enough that we discharge it from one kind of bondage, if we afterwards enflave it in another; but redeeming the time, fully implies using and improving it to the best of purposes. Redemption implies not only deliverance from a flate of fervitude, but also being brought into a state of liberty; and happiness. To redeem the time therefore, is in fhort, to devote it to God, who has an undoubted right to it, and whose service is perfect freedom. The true Christian is one that does not live to himself. but to God. The habitual language of his very heart is. -Lord what witt thou have me to do? In my personal concerns, or in what more immediately relates to myself; and in my relative concerns, in what I have to do with others; in my focial connexions, whether of nature or friendship; in the buffle of business, in the cheerful hours of conversation and social intercourse, and in the hours of more immediate devotion and piety-Lord what wilt thou have me to do? I defire to 10 act, fo to conduct myfelf, as may best answer the ends of my being in general, and the station in which I am placed in particular; I would so behave as may adorn my Christian profession and character, promote my own happiness and that of all around me, and above all, fo as may glorify thy great name! And when our Break to O time

ed—then is it truly redeemed. Then is it brought out of its captive state into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Having thus shewn what is implied in redeeming the time, I proceed to consider

II. How time may be redeemed.

Now time may be redeemed,

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(1.) By guarding against every unnecessary waste of it.

"Betwixt the more stated employments, and more important occurrences of human life, fays the excellent Mr. Boyle, Ithere usually happen to be interposed certain interstices of time, which though they are wont to be neglected, as being fingly, or within the compais of one day, inconfiderable, yet in a man's whole life amount to no contemptible portion of it: now these uncertain parentheses, if I may so call them, or interludes that happen to come between the more folemn passages, whether businesses or recreations of life, are wont to be loft by most men for want of a value for them, and even by good men for want of skill to preserve them: but as, though grains of fand and ashes be a part, but of a despicable smallness, and very easy and liable to be scattered and blown away, yet the skilful artificer, by a vehement fire, brings a number of these to afford him that noble substance glass; by whose help we may both fee ourselves, and our blemishes lively represented, as in looking-glasses, and discern celestial objects, as with telescopes, and with the sun

beams kindle disposed materials, as with burning glaffes: fo when these little fragments or parcels of time, which, if not carefully looked to, would be diffipated and loft, come to be managed by a skilful Christian, and to be improved by the celestial fire of devotion, they may be fo ordered as to afford us both looking-glaffes to drefs our fouls by, and perspectives to discover heavenly wonders, and incentives to inflame our hearts with charity and zeal: and fince goldsmiths and refiners are wont all the year long carefully to fave the very sweepings of their shops, because they may contain in them some filings or dust of those richer metals, gold and filver; I fee not why a Christian may not be as careful not to lose the fragments and leffer intervalsof a thing, incomparably more precious than any metal, Time; especially when the improvement of them, may not only redeem so many portions of our life, but turn them to pious uses, and particularly to the great advantage of devotion." It is, I am fure, impossible to compute how much precious time might be redeemed-how many of the hours we have loft might be as it were brought back and recovered-how many of the hours we are still enflaving might be fet at liberty, and employed in a rational and pious manner as they ought to be-were we thus to guard against every unneceffary wafte of time.

2. Regularity in the employment of our time, is another method of redeeming it.

It is amazing to think how much time is loft and

thrown away, merely for want of a little regularity in the dipolal of it. There are many people to be met with, who appear to be always in a great hurry, are never at leifure, but perpetually buly, and yet all the while they do little or nothing. They begin upon one thing, then before that is half done go to another, then return to the first, and so on, till their hurrying round is fuddenly stopped by difeafe or death, and then, big with life's boafted futurities they expire. The great fecret of redeeming time, lies very much in the regular, orderly disposal of it. The man that is regular in the employment of his time, who lays down a plan for the dispofal of it according to the nature of his fituation and connections in life, and endeavors to act accordingly, will do ten times as much as another who acts at random, in the fame time; and without any hurry or difficulty. Much time may be most advantageously redeemed, only by the use of regularity and order in the disposal of it. For want of this, very often as much time is spent in deliberating what to do, as would nearly suffice to do it.* In the last place,

3. Ano-

^{* &}quot;It was the practice of a pious Christian, to distribute his twenty-four hours into three parts, allowing one part, or eight hours for eating, drinking, sleeping, company and diversions; another part for the work of his particular calling in the world; and another third part, or eight hours, for the special and immediate service of God and religion, (viz.) reading, meditation, prayer, &c. It is said of Grotius, who spent his days in an insatiable pursuit of human learning, that when he lay on his death-bed, he wished himself in the stead of his devout neighbor above referred to, and at the same time passed a censure on his own life, crying out, heu vitam perdidi operose nihil agen-

active and diligent in the use of it.

The motto of the arms of that truly great and good man, Dr. Doddridge, was, Dum vivimus, vivamus. Whilst we live, let us live, that is, let us live indeed, live to some purpose, live as those that are truly alive and lively. Answerable to which is the advice of the wise man—Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;—do it effectually. It is hardly to be conceived how much more is to be done by a person that is active and diligent, than by one who is indelent and trisling: Would you then indeed redeem time, be active and diligent; and whatsoever your hands find to do, according to your different

do: I have wasted my life in laborious trisling. I would endeavor to act, with caution in this matter; no one business ought to ingress all my time, nor increach upon the just demands of another; and though the division I have mentioned may not fuit me, nor would I be scrupulously nice in such matters, yet some care is due here; and the more exact and prudent I am in my rules, and sleady in the pursuit of them, the better I shall improve my time.

MIE werfett o : Bennett's Christian Oratory, page 440.

- * Under this motto the Doctor wrote the following lines, very expressive of his general temper:
 - Live, while you live, the Epicare would lay,
 - And feize the pleasures of the prefent day. 4 1111
 - · Live, while you live, the facred Preacher cries,
 - And give to God each moment as it flies 1
 - Lord, in my views let both united be;
 - I live in pleasure, when I live to thee."

Life of Dr. Doddridge, p. 171.

Pregnant with

† 1 Cor. xv. 32.

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1 Ecclef, ix, 10.

different fituations in life, whatfoever appears to be your duty and interest to attend to, do it with all your might, do it in earnest, as those that are determined, by the help of divine grace, to do it. Do not you Christians sleep as do others, but be up and doing, work the works of him that sent you into the world whilst it is day, and before the night cometh. See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time—which may be effectually done, by guarding against every unnecessary waste of it, being regular and orderly in the disposal of it, and active and diligent in the proper use and improvement of it. But why, it may be said, should we be thus anxious about the redemption of time? Which leads me to the

III. and last thing proposed, which was, to enforce the exhortation here given to redeem the time.

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Do you ask, why you should endeavor to redeem the time? I answer,

1. Because there is nothing more important.

"On all important time, through every age,
Though much and warm the wise have urg'd; the man
Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour.

Pregnant with all eternity can give;
Pregnant with all, that makes archangels finile."

Life of Dr. Doddridge to, 171.

or of Potact !

Young.

Time is the only space in which we can hope to begin an acquaintance with God and Christ and spiritual things, the only season we have to glorify God on earth, and to be meetened for the everlasting enjoyment of him in heaven. Instead of redeeming the time, are we suffered to abuse and trisle with it—to spend it in the perpetual hurries of business, or the infatuating scenes of what is falsely called pleasure—to waste it in idleness and dissipation, or destroy it in the service of sin—What then can be before us, but an eternity of darkness, horror and everlasting despair? As the tree salls so it lies, as death leaves so will judgment find us, as we are in time, so shall we be to all eternity.

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"Throw time away ! ad 100 ob

Throw empires and be blameless!—Moments feize: Heaven's on their wing: A moment we may wish, When worlds want wealth to buy."

There is nothing men are in common more prodigal of than they are of their time; and yet, what can be more important? The time of life is, as we have observed, the time to seek after God, to serve him, to receive salvation from him, and to be meetened for the eternal enjoyment of him. To waste and destroy our time therefore, is to dishonor God and destroy our own souls. And what profit will it be to any of us—(O think of it, ye that contentedly live without God in the world, seeking only your own things, whilst you are to-

tally regardless of the things of Christ !) -what profit will it be even to gain the whole world and lose your own fouls? What profit will it be to have wasted all our time in idleness, or worse than idleness, in fin and folly-what profit to have been wholly taken up with those things which perish in the using; and to lose those things which are eternal? The precious hours of life, Sirs, were not giwen to any of us, to be trifled with, but to answer the most important purposes. We must give an account to God another day what use we have made of them. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wife, redeeming the time. Whatever you lavish away, do not lavish away your precious time. Whatever you are unconcerned about, do not be unconcerned about the improvement of your time. This is the feafon to lay a good foundation for the time to come-this is the feefon to ferve and glorify God-to grow in the knowledge of him, to promote his honor in this world, and to be made meet for the enjoyment of him in another. If there is any thing of importance in the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God, as a covenant God and Father in Christ Jesus,—if the soul and its eternal falvation be of any value—what can be more important than time? It is in time, we are meetened for a happy, or fitted for a miserable eternity.

[&]quot;Who murders TIME, he crushes in the birth, A power ethereal." A power ethereal." feeling of a year own things, whilh you have to

2. We should be concerned to redeem the time, because it is exceedingly short and uncertain.

What are the limits of life?* Even when extended to the longest period, it is but comparatively a hand's breadth. It soon passeth away. Myriads upon myriads have lived, and died already—and soon, very soon, we that are now amongst the living shall be numbered with the dead. Our days, months, and

" I will allow threescore and ten years for the life of man, it may be more, or it may be less, but that is the common period; if any furvive it, they can scarce be faid, for the most part, to live, but languish and die, finking under the burdens of decaying nature: out of this fum I must make a deduction for infancy and childhood, which cannot be well less than fixteen years : few comparatively begin to live to any good purpose before that age, and most not till long after; and this will reduce the threescore and ten to fifty-four, Again, one third of that must be allowed for sleep, in which all action and life, is, as it were suspended, which finks to thirty-fix : and of this I am afraid most people will be found to trifle away a fourth part; that is, of the fixteen hours which remain for action or life every day, not above twelve of them are employed in the proper buliness of life; with some I know it is better, but with the generality not near fo well; and this brings down the account to twenty-feven years, that is all the time that the aged person of seventy can, strictly speaking, be supposed to live, according to a very modest computation; though he should be one of them that began early to improve his time, and has been constant in doing it. And how much of my feventy years is already gone? How much of the twenty-feven, according to the deduction made, has been wasted by immoderate sleep, unnecessary visits, diversions, recreations, fauntring and identify? And upon the whole, to what a narrow feanting is life reduced ! Consider this, O my foul! and be awakened; be up, and doing; trifle no more; work whilst it is day. Lord, teach me fo to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

Bennett's Christian Oratory, p. 434.

years, are flying swiftly away, and e'er long will be gone."

"Youth is not rich in time-It may be poor!"

We know that life cannot be very long, but how short it may be none can say. Death is far from waiting for us always till we are old; it often feizes us when we are young. The graves of young people are more frequently opened than those of the old. In the bills of mortality, through every part of the known world, there are yast numbers more set down that die young, than who live to be old. We can never tell when or how we may die. The event itself is certain, but the time and manner of it infinitely uncertain. What more powerful motive can there be, to ftir us up to the redemption of time? It is but a span of time you have at most-and this short span, by ten thousand occurrences, unforeseen and unavoidable, may be rendered yet shorter. continually flying away with rapid wings, and eternity, vast eternity hastening on. Its awful scenes may open upon us in an unexpected hour, and within the compass of the present year, may we not asfuredly fay-fome of us shall die. But before death comes, fhould we not feriously and anxiously enquire whether we know any thing of true life? That life which furvives even death itself, and shall never never be extinguished? Upon the whole, what can be more worthy our concern than redeeming the timewhen

when we confider its infinite importance on the one hand, and its shortness and uncertainty on the other?

Let me then close the present discourse with an earnest exhortation to the young and old, rich and poor, to persons of every character and station, to redeem their precious time. You have loft, we have all lost too much already; -O, let us lose no more, but rescue our remaining moments from the slavery of fin and folly, and in the strength of divine grace, most unreservedly devote them to God! Yielding ourselves up to him as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable through Christ, which is our reasonable fervice. Let me in a particular manner call upon those who are in the morning of their days, to remember that now is the accepted time, now is the day of falvation-now is the time to feek the Lord-to enquire after him, to devote yourselves to him, to take his gentle yoke upon you and learn of him, to lift under his banner, to ferve to honor and glorify him, to yield yourselves up to him, to live by faith upon him, and to be meetened for the eternal enjoyment of him !- Many and great are your privileges, peculiar are the advantages afforded you-but if they are all neglected and abused, what will they avail but to aggravate your condemnation! You have the word of God and his ministers, calling upon you and expostulating with you, and fetting the way of life and falvation before you.- Iefus stands at the door and knocks-and I would hope will not knock in vain! O that you may know

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in this your day the things that belong to your peace, left e'er you are aware, they should be hid from your eyes!

One thing remember is needful, and that is true religion; without this, you will be miserable in life, at death, and for ever. To-day then if ye will hear the voice of God calling upon you, harden not your hearts. However you employ your time, if you do not use it and improve it to the great purposes of religion, and an eternal world—you will have a most awful, dreadful account to give of it.

When Alexander the Great, was about to fet out on his grand expedition against the Persians, he made fuch large presents to the Lords of his court, his Ministers of state, and Generals, that Parmenio his particular friend could not help asking him what he intended to referve for himself?-He replied-HOPE.—And would you, my friends, when fetting out on your grand expedition for an eternal world, that world from whence no traveller returns,-would you enjoy at this awful juncture, not the poor worldly hope of an Alexander, but the glorious hope of the Christian ?- See then that ye walk circumspettly, not as fools, but as wife, redeeming the time; remembring that your days here are but few and evil, and that it is therefore your highest interest, as well as your most indispensable duty, to be habitually looking, not at the things which are feen and which are temporal, but at those things which are unseen and ETERNAL!

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